

BACKGROUND

COVID-19 is a virus that causes a respiratory illness. People infected have had an illness that has ranged from mild (like a common cold) to severe requiring individuals to be hospitalized. Deaths from COVID-19 have also occurred.

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person to person:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) by respiratory droplets produced when a person talks, coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

If you develop symptoms, your healthcare providers may order a test or you may acquire a test that is performed at home. Your results will be provided back to you by your healthcare provider anywhere between a few minutes to several days after testing. The time it takes depends on the type of test, the testing volume and the laboratory doing the testing.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WHILE I WAIT FOR MY RESULT?

- Self-isolate in your home. If you live with others, self-isolate in a private room and use a private bathroom if possible.
- Make a list of close contacts you have had from two days before you became sick (or tested positive if you did not have symptoms) until you began isolation. Close contacts are people who have been within 6 feet of you for 15 minutes or more. A close contact could also be someone you had extremely close contact with (face to face) even if less than 15 minutes or if you spent time with an individual while you felt sick.
- Interact with others as little as possible.
- Wear a tight-fitting mask if you must be around others.
- If you develop additional symptoms or if your symptoms get worse, contact your healthcare provider for instructions.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I TEST POSITIVE?

- You should stay home and isolate for at least 5 days. (Day 0 is the day you develop symptoms or test positive)
 - If you tested positive and have symptoms, your isolation can end after 5 full days if you are fever-free for 24 hours (without fever-reducing medication) and your symptoms are improving.
 - If you continue to have fever or your other symptoms have not improved after 5 days, you should wait to end your isolation until you are fever-free for 24 hours (without fever-reducing medication) and your other symptoms have improved.
 - If you tested positive and did not have symptoms, end isolation at least 5 days after your positive test.
 - Regardless of whether you had symptoms, you should continue to take precautions until day 10 by wearing a mask, avoiding travel and avoid being around people who are high risk.
- People testing positive who are moderately or severely ill with COVID-19 (including those who were hospitalized or required intensive care or ventilation support) and people with compromised immune should isolate for at least 10 and up to 20 days.
- Notify your close contacts and let them know they have been exposed and may need to quarantine. This includes your family members.
- Keep a phone nearby as you may be contacted to participate in your confidential case investigation for contact tracing. Even if you don't hear from your health department, you should follow all instructions listed here.

- If your symptoms get worse or if you require hospitalization, notify your healthcare provider immediately.
- If you do not need hospitalization, continue to self-isolate at home.

WHAT DO I DO IF MY TEST IS NEGATIVE?

- If you had a known exposure COVID-19 and are in one of the following groups, you should quarantine:
 - Persons aged 18 or older and completed the primary series of recommended vaccine, but who have not received a recommended booster shot when eligible.
 - Persons who received the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine (completing the primary series) over 2 months ago and have not received a recommended booster shot.
 - Persons who are not vaccinated or have not completed a primary vaccine series.
- People who are quarantining should stay home and away from other people for at least 5 days (day 0 through day 5) after the last contact with a person who has COVID-19 and wear a well-fitting mask around others at home where possible. Additionally, these people should monitor for symptoms, including fever (100.4°F or greater).
 - If symptoms do not develop, they should test on day 5, if possible, after the last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
 - If symptoms develop, they should be tested immediately and isolate until the results are received. If the test is positive, the person should isolate.
- If you had a known exposure COVID-19 and are in one of the following groups, you do not need to quarantine
 - Persons who are 18 or older and have received ALL recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised individuals.
 - Persons who are 5-17 and have completed the primary series (i.e., two doses of Pfizer) of COVID-19 vaccines.
 - Persons who had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days as diagnosed by a viral test.
- People who do not need to quarantine should still wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days from the date of the last close contact with someone with COVID-19 (the date of last close contact is considered day 0). Additionally, it is recommended that anyone exposed to COVID-19 should get tested on day 5, if possible, after the last close contact with someone with COVID-19. If that test is positive or the person develops COVID-19 symptoms, they should isolate.
- If you were tested but had **no known exposure** to a confirmed case, and you do not have any symptoms, you can stop your self-quarantine.
- If you were tested but had **no known exposure** to a confirmed case, and you are symptomatic, you may have another respiratory pathogen that is circulating in the community. Avoid work and group settings until three days after the last day of your respiratory symptoms and fever.

WHAT INFORMATION CAN I PROVIDE TO MY CLOSE CONTACTS?

- Inform your close contacts, including family members, that they may need to quarantine.
- The guidance you would follow after testing negative and being a close contact is the same guidance you can provide to your close contacts.

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, visit <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

The latest information on the coronavirus in the U.S. and worldwide can be found on the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov/).